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TRADE HUB AND AFRICAN PARTNERS NETWORK

PARTNER SELECTION REPORT

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ACRONYMS

AAFEX	Association of African Agro Exports
ACA	African Cashew Alliance
ACTE	Africa Competitiveness and Trade Expansion Initiative
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AFDB	African Development Bank
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
APEX-CI	*Association pour la Promotion des Exportations en Côte d'Ivoire*
ARC	AGOA Resource Center
ASEPEX	*Agence Sénégalaise de Promotion des Exportations*
ATP/E-ATP	Agribusiness and Trade Promotion/Expanded Agribusiness and Trade Promotion
CCI-BF	*Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie du Burkina*
CFA	*Communauté Financière Africaine*
CIC-B	*Comité Interprofessionnel des Céréales du Burkina Faso*
CILSS	*Comité Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel*
COFENABVI-AO	*Confédération des Fédérations Nationales de la Filière Bétail/Viande des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*
COP	Chief of Party
CTA	Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberation Scheme
EU	European Union
FtF	Feed the Future

FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIEPA	Gambian Investment and Export Promotion Agency
GIZ	German Development Cooperation
GSA	Global Shea Alliance
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
IT	Information and Technology
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Market information systems
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NF	National Federation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OCPV	Office de Commercialisation des Produits Vivriers
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PIVA	Partner Institutional Viability Assessments
RCN	Raw Cashew Nut
r-OCA	Rapid Organizational Capacity Assessment
RESIMAO	*Réseau des Systèmes d'Information des Marchés en Afrique de l'Ouest*
ROPPA	*Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TH-CBT	Trade Hub Capacity Building Team

TTEE	Trade and Transport Enabling Environment
UEMOA	Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WAGN	West African Grains Network
WATH	West Africa Trade Hub
WAMIS NET	West African Market Information Systems Net

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the Trade Hub and African Partners Network project's partner selection to identify key partners for collaboration and capacity building support. This process was completed through a rapid assessment exercise carried out in May and June 2014 using the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool.

The following organizations participated in the assessment:

Private Sector Value Chain Associations

- *West African Grains Network (WAGN)—Rice, Maize, Millet/Sorghum.*
- *Confédération des Fédérations Nationales de la Filière Bétail/Viande des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (COFENABVI AO) —Livestock (Cattle, Sheep and Goats).*
- *African Cashew Alliance (ACA)—Cashew Nut*
- *Association of African Agro-Exports (AAFEX) —Value-added Value Chains*

Regional Trade and Transport Facilitation, and Market Information Systems

- *Borderless Alliance*
- *Réseau des Systèmes d'Information des Marchés en Afrique de l'Ouest (RESIMAO)*

Export Trade Support: AGOA[1] Resource Centers Host Institutions

- *Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA)*
- *Agence Sénégalaise de Promotion des Exportations (ASEPEX)*
- *Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Burkina Faso (CCI-BF)*
- *Association pour la Promotion des Exportations de Côte D'Ivoire (APEX-CI)*

The Trade Hub Capacity Building team (TH-CBT) held meetings and interviews with the representatives of each organization. Secondary data sources were reviewed for additional information. For each organization, the TH-CBT completed analyses of organizational capacities around the areas of governance, operations/administration, human resources management, financial management, organizational management, program management, project performance management, and sustainability.

Chapter 1 of this report describes the overall process, including the framework for the partner selection process, methodology, and information gathering steps. Chapter 2 presents the findings, including the individual organizational profiles and a capacity building analysis. Chapter 3 presents the results: Based on the analysis, the recommendation is to retain the pre-selected partners. An outline of thematic areas of capacity building support common to all the partner organizations is also presented.

[1] African Growth and Opportunity Act

1. INTRODUCTION

Capacity building of private sector actors and regional intergovernmental bodies rests at the heart of the new Trade Hub and African Partners Network project (hereafter "Trade Hub"). The Trade Hub will partner with and strengthen capacities of select regional value chain associations and global alliances, trade and transport facilitation organizations, and regional economic communities across West Africa.

This report discusses the choice of institutions selected as partners capable of contributing to the achievement of the Trade Hub's objective to increase regional trade of key cereals and livestock, and global trade of value-added products. It describes the partner confirmation process, completed through a rapid assessment exercise carried out in May and June 2014, using USAID's Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool.[2] The assessment provided the Trade Hub team a platform to discuss with the leadership of the partners about their interests, objectives, and capacities, and how these aligned with the objectives of the project.

This report includes findings and analysis of the current state of organizational development among the partner organizations, and offers recommendations on potential areas for practical and responsive short- and long-term capacity strengthening support. The partner selection report complements the value chain assessment reports prepared by the Trade Hub team, in light of the connection between the partner organizations and the candidate value chains to be supported by the project.

1.1 ABOUT THE TRADE HUB PROJECT

USAID/West Africa's Mission-wide goal is the West-African led advancement of social and economic well-being. This goal is supported by several development objectives, including "broad-based economic growth and resilience advanced through West African partners." The Trade Hub and African Partners' Network Project (the "Trade Hub") will contribute to this development objective by achieving two critical intermediate results:

> 1) Improving the capacity of West Africa's farmers and firms in targeted regional and global value chains.
>
> 2) Improving the business enabling environment by addressing transport constraints and trade barriers affecting the efficiency of the region's corridors and borders.

The Trade Hub will work through regional private sector associations and regional governmental entities to help channel all partners' efforts in a way that will address critical constraints to trade competitiveness, capture opportunities to expand trade, demonstrate West Africa's productive potential to investors, and facilitate greater investment in the region. Its results will include both an increase in 1) regional trade in key agricultural commodities, a critical Feed the Future (FTF) indicator, and in 2) value-added global exports, a targeted indicator for the Africa Competitiveness and Trade Expansion (ACTE) Initiative, which ultimately aims to increase Africa's share of world trade.

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[2] Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Tool, Version May 2011. USAID

The project will build the capacity of several key groups of African partners—regional private sector associations and alliances, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA), a multi-donor funded Transport and Facilitation Observatory, and Global Development Alliances with private sector companies. As the Trade Hub works with associations and regional alliances, it will help them serve as leaders in promoting reforms, attracting buyers and investors, and adopting improved practices. Eventually, the Trade Hub's partners will act independently and take on even greater leadership roles.

The Trade Hub's major components are:

- Regional staple foods development (livestock and grains)
- Global value chain development (targeted agro-processing and manufactured consumer goods)
- Finance and investment
- Transport and the trade enabling environment
- Capacity building
- Communications
- Administration and management, including grants administration

1.2 SELECTED PARTNERS AND ASSOCIATED VALUE CHAINS

In the Trade Hub proposal submitted to USAID by Abt Associates, several organizations were identified as potential partners for the project. The selection of these partners was strategic, for two reasons. First, these organizations support the value chains and policy advocacy of interest to the Project. Secondly, they had received USAID support through the previous West Africa Trade Hub (WATH 1&2) projects and the Agribusiness & Trade Program (ATP) and Expanded Agribusiness & Trade Program (E-ATP). The Trade Hub's decision in the choice of partners, therefore, was meant to leverage and gain a high return on USAID's previous and current investments. Working with these partners, the Trade Hub will be able to scale up and scale out from the foundations already laid, focusing on growth potentials, and aiming for ultimate graduation of the partners into self-sufficient organizations.

The partner organizations include value chain industry leaders, trade, transport, and market information facilitating institutions. A subset of the Trade Hub's prospective partners that participated in the organizational capacity assessment is listed below.

Private Sector Value Chain Associations[3]

- *West African Grains Network (WAGN)—Rice, Maize, Millet/ Sorghum.*
- *Confédération des Fédérations Nationales de la Filière Bétail/Viande des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (COFENABVI-AO)—Livestock (Cattle, Sheep and Goats).*
- *African Cashew Alliance (ACA)—Cashew Nut*
- *Association of African Agro-Exports (AAFEX) —Value-added Value Chains*

Regional Trade and Transport Facilitation, and Market Information Systems

[3] The Trade Hub assessment team was unable to conduct an OCA exercise with the Global Shea Alliance during this first round. The exercise will be scheduled for a later date.

- *Borderless Alliance*
- *Réseau des Systèmes d'Information des Marchés en Afrique de l'Ouest (RESIMAO)*

Export Trade Support: AGOA[4] Resource Centers Host Institutions

- *Agence Sénégalaise de Promotion des Exportations ASEPEX)*
- *Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Burkina Faso (CCI-BF)*
- Association Pour La Promotion des Exportations de Côte D'Ivoire (APEX-CI)

1.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment fulfilled a contractual obligation that required the Trade Hub to review and revise its choice of partners during the 90-day startup period of the project. According to the USAID/West Africa Trade Hub and African Partners Network project solicitation, "*selected value-chains associations should have the capacity and interest to work regionally. Selected value chain association's goals, interests, and potential capacities must align with the project aims.*"

The specific objectives of the assessment were to:

- Justify the choice of partners by confirming alignment of the associations' mandate and goals with the Trade Hub project objectives
- Familiarize the partners with the OCA tool, which the Trade Hub and partners will use to measure progress in institutional capacity resulting from project support
- Update profiles of each partner association based on OCA findings, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for collaboration with the Trade Hub
- Identify initial capacity building needs and proposed interventions that will inform the Trade Hub's capacity building work planning for the remainder of FY14.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The Trade Hub Capacity Building team (TH-CBT) conducted a participatory qualitative assessment with representatives of the partner organizations listed above, during May and June 2014. The terms of reference for the assessment in provided in Annex A. The team used USAID's OCA tool to guide information gathering, analyses, and reporting. The assessment team had to make a slight modification in how the OCA was used this first time. Instead of a detailed conventional OCA, the team opted for two-phase process: an initial rapid OCA (r-OCA) with the leadership of each partner organization, to be followed later on by more in-depth, interactive OCA sessions with a wider representation of the membership of each partner organization (with the exception of the AGOA Resource Centers).

The need for the modification emerged out of an introductory roundtable discussion in April 2014 between the TH-CBT and key staff members of the Borderless Alliance, Global Shea Alliance (GSA), and

[4] African Growth and Opportunities Act

ACA at their Executive Secretariats based in Accra. The conversation revealed a greater interest on the partners' side for immediate support for on-the-shelf, ready-to-go activities that they had prepared while waiting for the "new" Trade Hub to start. It was evident they understood their organizations to have been, *de facto*, already "selected" as partners for the project, likely due to their connections to the previous WATH projects. Thus, the initial meeting with these three alliances prompted the TH-CBT to take a more nuanced approach to the organizational capacity assessments, to avoid the risk of being perceived as an interrogation by the Trade Hub for making decisions of sanction or elimination.

Therefore, the Trade Hub team used the r-OCA discussions to:

- Familiarize the partners with the OCA as a tool for self-assessment of performance and for measuring progress;
- Gain insight into the current state of the organization and activities; and
- Identify short-term interventions that would inform Trade Hub activities for the remainder of the FY14 work plan.

For the second phase, planned for August and September, the Trade Hub will facilitate for each partner organization a two-day, in-depth and interactive OCA workshop with participation from a broad spectrum of the membership. These sessions will review and refine findings from the r-OCA, validate proposed capacity building interventions, and define implementation mechanisms, including roles and responsibilities of the Trade Hub and each partner.

1.3.1 GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF ASSESSMENT

Capacity is the ability of a human system to perform, sustain itself, and self-renew. This definition of capacity reveals its multifaceted character: It exists in individuals, organizations, and in networks of actors; it is dynamic, not a static state or quality; it has a value-proposition, creating some form of added value; it is about staying alive and active, about adjusting and developing over time[5]. Thus an organization with capacity has the ability to function as a resilient, strategic and autonomous entity (Kaplan, 1999). The Trade Hub project focus will be on developing the capacities of its partner organizations and their members to enhance their performance and ensure sustainability.

Organizational capacity building is of growing importance in agricultural and economic development initiatives as host-country organizations play increasingly central roles as partners, implementers, and beneficiaries of internationally funded development projects[6]. Capacity building is a central rationale, a core function of development work.Support of capacity building in practice consists of deliberate efforts to make capacities grow over time, beyond the existing conditions.

Effective capacity building support starts with rigorous and objective diagnoses of an organization's capacities, performance, sustainability, and development needs. Such appraisal is the premise for targeted and tailored interventions that respond to individual needs. Several diagnostic tools exist for evaluating an organization's strengths and weaknesses, in order to identify areas for improvements. Over its lifespan, the Trade Hub will use the OCA tool developed by USAID to identify gaps in capacities, to

[5] Capacity Building in Practice

[6] The ProCapacity Index for Agricultural Producer Organizations; Abt Associates

define best approaches for strengthening partner organizations, and to measure progress resulting from project assistance.

The OCA tool measures seven broad, high-level components of an organization's capacity. The TH-CBT used the 2011 version of the OCA, which defines the following components:

- Governance
- Administration
- Human resources management
- Financial management
- Organizational management
- Program management
- Project performance management

Each component has a series of categories, each with sub-elements of organizational capacity. The OCA tool is included in Annex D. Each capacity area can be numerically scored to obtain a rating that indicates the relative need for improvement in each area. The numerical scores are then translated into a qualitative description that characterizes the organization's developmental stage in each of the categories as nascent, emerging, expanding, or mature. The result of an OCA is a detailed description of the organization's capacity areas in terms of progressive stages of organizational development.

1.3.2 INFORMATION GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

In preparation for the assessment, the Trade Hub Chief of Party (COP) wrote letters to the partners introducing the project, and requested meetings with the TH-CBT for the OCA exercise (Annexes B and C). Using the OCA tool categories as a guide, the TH-CBT used both primary and secondary sources to gather information. For reasons explained earlier, the team modified the OCA tool into a rapid appraisal, as opposed to a detailed assessment. The team held face-to-face discussions with the leadership of each organization at their head office location. Open-ended questions and unstructured interviewing techniques were used, allowing for free and open exchanges between the TH-CBT and the partners. Questions were posed for and from both the partners and TH-CBT. The TH-CBT took extra caution not to make the conversions sound like a cross-examination; at the same time, the team ensured that topics related to the seven capacity areas of the OCAT were covered, as relevant to each partner. Since it was an open exchange, the partner interviewees voluntarily shared information on topics not included in the OCA categories. More encouraging, perhaps, was that all the partners assessed shared with the TH-CBTS their multi-year strategic plans, annual action plans, and other documentation they though useful to the Trade Hub. Their eagerness and preparedness they showed for collaboration with the new Trade Hub justified the modification made in the application of the OCA. The face-to-face conversations were followed up with email communications from both sides, with the partners continuing to share additional information with the Trade Hub, both solicited and unsolicited.

At the close of each meeting, the TH-CBT passed out paper copies of the OCA tool, in French or English as appropriate; soft copies were later emailed out. Only the AGOA Resource Centers (ARCs) host institutions received the OCA sheet in advance of the meetings. Partners were encouraged to review the OCA tool and to do a self-rating, more for their benefit at this time than for the Trade Hub's use. This way of familiarizing them with the tool was meant to prepare the ground for the proposed follow-on detailed OCA, which was discussed and to which there was general agreement. Some of the

partners later on completed and forwarded OCA self-ratings to the TH-CBT, further evidence of readiness to work with the Trade Hub project.

Apart from the information collected through direct contacts with the partner organizations, current Trade Hub staff who previously worked with the partner organizations provided a rich source of information. In fact, these personal relationships greatly facilitated the assessment process. Secondary data sources reviewed included multi-year strategic plans, annual action plans, final and close-out reports from the WATH and ATP/E-ATP projects, and promotional brochures from each organization.

Analysis of the information was an ongoing process. As individual assessments were completed, notes were transcribed and analyzed for emerging themes related to the seven organizational capacity areas. Qualitative profiles of all the assessed partner organizations were developed. Consistent with the modified form of the OCA exercise, the TH-CBT decided not to do a numeric ranking, as in a conventional OCA. The assessment score sheets that were left behind with the partners and will constitute the basis for discussions in the follow-on assessments. The next two chapters present, respectively, an analysis of findings and recommendations.

2. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the assessment exercise, based on perspectives shared by the people interviewed and secondary information sources. The discussions identified strengths and weaknesses in various organizational capacity areas delineated in the OCA tool, namely: governance, operations/administration, human resources management, financial management, organizational management, program management, and project performance management. At the same time, each profile is different, reflecting the different stages of organizational development among the partner institutions.

2.1 WEST AFRICAN GRAINS NETWORK

2.1.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The West African Grains Network (WAGN) is a young advocacy organization whose main objective is to promote the competitiveness of the cereals sector through the facilitation of greater intra-regional commerce of cereals in West Africa. Cereals, specifically rice, maize, millet/sorghum, are targeted value chains for support under the new Trade Hub project. Cereals are the main staple food in the diet of millions of people in the region, and a major source of income for producers, processors and traders. Production of cereals is largely dominated by smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are resource-limited and categorized among the poorest farmers. Women's groups and women-owned small and medium enterprises (SME) predominate in the processing and value-added transformation of cereals. Despite its socio-economic importance, however, the cereal sector is faced with multiple challenges at each node of the value chain. Similar to other smallholder-dominated agricultural sectors, the competitiveness of the cereals value chain in West Africa is constrained by:

- Poor access by value chains actors to relevant commercial, technological and regulatory information related to the cereal sectors in West Africa;
- Missed market opportunities by cereal producers, processors, and traders despite increasing regional demand and cereal availability;
- An inadequate enabling policy environment to foster growth in the cereals sector in the region;
- Absence of a representative and credible institutional advocate to defend the interest of cereals value chains actors.

The advent of WAGN was intended as a solution to the absence of an organizational entity that would lead cereal value chain actors to address the policy, production, and marketing constraints impeding competitiveness of the sector. From the beginning, the idea and establishment of WAGN was nurtured by the former USAID ATP and E-ATP programs. These programs provided direction, technical and financial support to the young organization from 2008 to 2013. Milestone dates in the evolution of the WAGN include:

- **2008**: Meeting in Accra, Ghana of key actors in the cereal value chain from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. Sponsored by ATP to validate findings of a study on the West African cereal sector.
- **2009**: In Ouagadougou, the *Comité Interprofessionnel des Filières Céréales et Niébé du Burkina Faso*

(CIC-B) was selected to organize inter-professional associations of cereal value chain actors in the eight countries. CIC-B conducted information sessions and meetings to sensitize cereal actors about the emerging network and its rationale. Provisional WAGN committees and focal points were identified in each country.

- **2010**: Establishment and strengthening of 10 inter-professional associations in all eight countries.
- **2011**: ATP evaluation of provisional committees and focal points to assess capacity to effectively implement the network.
- **Early 2012**: ATP project consultants visited provisional committees and focal points in Ghana, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo to identify achievements, challenges, and define an approach to expedite formal establishment of the network.
- **October 2012**: Consultative meeting in Ouagadougou resulted in the formation of a nine-member working group (one member from each country, and the ninth a technical person from ATP) tasked with developing WAGN's strategic development plan for 2013-2015. J.E. Austin led preparation of the strategic development plan.
- **February 2013**: In Lomé, draft strategic plan reviewed, recommendations for formation of nine-member board and acquisition of office space in Lomé are implemented.
- **May 2013**: In Ouagadougou, draft strategic plan finalized and adopted by nine-member board; annual plans of activity developed based on strategic plan. ATP/E-ATP project close out.
- **October 2013**: In Cotonou, meeting between the technical and financial partners, and nine-member board held, funded by the FARM Foundation.

WAGN is now in its fifth year of establishing an institutional identity. While some successes have been registered, as with every nascent organization, WAGN still has a long way to go before it can function as an apex organization and play the potentially significant role envisioned at its creation. In its 2013-2015 Strategic Development Plan, WAGN defined the following objectives:

- Structure the cereals trade in West Africa (on the basis of market principles, to encourage increased volumes and value addition of traded products, and increased investments in the grains sector)
- Facilitate access by small and large producers, traders and processors to national and regional markets
- Improve the availability of cereals of good quality and adequate quantity at the correct times, and at more stable prices
- Influence policies and reforms at national and regional levels so that a favorable environment is created for the cereal trade in the sub-regional trade.

The question now is not whether WAGN can attain these objectives, but how it can grow into the strong and viable organization it must become in order to effectively drive growth in the West African cereals sector. Based on the Trade Hub's assessment, WAGN could be a potential force, but it still requires significant amounts of technical and financial support to have the requisite systems in place for an organization with a regional focus.

2.1.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

In terms of governance, for the moment, the leadership of WAGN consists of the following positions:

- President (also the Chairman of CIC-B) based in Burkina Faso
- Vice President, based in Ghana
- General Secretary, based in Benin
- Treasurer, based in Senegal

These individuals have been managing the affairs of the network, especially in the area of fundraising and capacity building, by attending regional and international conferences. WAGN is yet to have a formalized secretariat with dedicated staff that would implement the activities outlined in its strategic development plan. The current membership of WAGN remains the eight founding member countries. A priority interest of the leadership is to expand WAGN's membership to include all 15 ECOWAS countries. According to the President of WAGN with whom the TH-CBT had meetings in Ouagadougou, broadening the membership base is critical for the sustainability of the network. Membership dues make up the capital base of WAGN; currently, the membership/entrance fee is CFA 500,000 ($1,032.54) and annual contribution is CFA 1,000,000 ($2,065.07) per country. The main eligibility criterion is recognition by the Ministry of Agriculture, in addition to being legally registered as an inter-professional association.

Since the closeout of ATP, WAGN has attracted funding from diverse sources for implementation of specific activities. This interest is due to the importance of cereals in the socio-economic growth of West Africa. WAGN has secured financial support from the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), and FARM Foundation, for a feasibility study on cereal market information systems for the benefit of WAGN members, a workshop on rural finance funded by AFD, and a training on rural finance, funded by CTA.

Diversification of financial partnership is a source of sustainability and real capacity building. In WAGN's meeting with the TH-CBT, the WAGN President indicated that the organization has identified several donors prepared to provide financial support to the network, especially for the implementation of the strategic development plan. These donors include OXFAM International, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), AFD, and FARM Foundation. However, it appears that WAGN was waiting to get the "green light" from USAID (meaning the new Trade Hub) on the specific components of the strategic plan that USAID would support. WAGN sees itself as a creation of ATP ("a new baby," as the President argued), so the leadership feels they must consult with USAID before entering into partnerships with other donors.

WAGN's engagement with regional organizations positions the network as a potential influence on regional policies favorable to the regional trade in cereals. At the regional level, WAGN has received recognition from regional intergovernmental bodies like ECOWAS, *Comité Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel* (CILSS), and UEMOA. The network participated in the setting up of the ECOWAS Food Security Agency. WAGN has also collaborated with Le Hub Rural, *Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (ROPPA), COFENABVI-AO, and the Borderless Alliance to implement recommendations from the USAID/ATP Food Across Borders conference.

Although WAGN is yet to become fully operational as a recognizable institution, it has a clearly articulated development plan covering all the elements that are required for effective functioning of an organization.

Four core areas of programming are delineated in the development plan:

- **Core Program 1**: Enhance and improve access to information related to the development of the grains sector
- **Core Program 2**: Facilitate access to regional markets for the actors of the grains sector
- **Core Program 3**: Create an enabling policy and business environment for the growth of the grains sector
- **Core Program 4**: Planning and consolidation for institutional sustainability of WAGN

Since these four programming areas are consistent with the program components of the Trade Hub, opportunities exist for WAGN and the Trade Hub to initiate rapid results activities. This is a major strength, for it provides a quick entry point for capacity development support from development partners, because the organization has already identified its areas of needs for program implementation and management. The fact that WAGN's creation involved private sector cereal value chains actors could also be a contributing factor to its future sustainability, once the network takes off.

For the moment, however, this takeoff is constrained by a lack of resources to move forward in implementing its proposed programs. The network still needs considerable financial support to become fully operational. At least in the short term, WAGN will need considerable outside financial support to implement the strategic development plan for 2013-2015.

2.1.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

The Trade Hub Network could assist WAGN in becoming a functional regional advocate for the cereal value chain, along the same lines as other private sector value chain associations. Indeed, WAGN's leadership is highly expectant of such support, and they openly expressed WAGN's areas of need and interest to the Trade Hub team during the OCA meetings. For WAGN, the most urgent capacity building need is support for the establishment of an Executive Secretariat, including recruitment and salaries of an executive secretary and administrative staff, payment of office rent and operating expenses. The Secretariat would be responsible for operationalizing the strategic development plan and raising the visibility of WAGN. The second area of greatest need is support for a major membership drive, mainly through information sessions and workshops, in order to expand presence into all ECOWAS countries. WAGN's leadership believes that its performance and sustainability depends on the spread and quality of its membership. A membership drive would be accompanied by capacity building and training for members on the value chain approach and the role of inter-professional associations.

The Trade Hub Network project may consider starting off with the following.

- Prepare a collaborative partnership agreement and sign an MOU with WAGN.
- Together with WAGN, review and update the 2013-2015 strategic development plan to reflect current realities. Identify those program areas that align with the objectives of the Trade Hub; and develop an annual operational plan from the strategic development plan.
- Host a multi-donor roundtable meeting that brings together the Trade Hub, WAGN and the other financial partners that have pledged support for the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Develop a one-year capacity development support plan for October 2014 to September 2015, with emphasis on organizational management, but also other capacity areas.

- Validate the capacity development support plan at workshop with the nine-member committee.

These activities, all low-hanging fruits for the Trade Hub that are achievable within the remaining months of the FY14 workplan, should be given consideration.

2.2 CONFEDERATION DES FEDERATIONS NATIONALES DE LA FILIERE BETAIL/VIANDE DES PAYS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

2.2.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The *Confédération des Fédérations Nationales de la Filière Bétail/Viande des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (COFENABVI-AO), was born out of a meeting of livestock value chain actors held in Bamako, Mali, on December 27-28, 2004. COFENABVI-AO was established initially as a regional umbrella organization for national inter-professional associations in eight UEMOA countries. COFENABVI-AO has since gained footholds in other ECOWAS countries following a General Assembly held in Lomé, Togo in 2010. The confederation is a legally registered NGO with diplomatic status in Côte d'Ivoire (where its president resides) with an operational secretariat in Ouagadougou. Each member country has a national representative who liaises with national governments and member federations. The majority of COFENABVI-AO members are medium to large-scale private actors in the livestock value chain interested in growing herd size and improving quality for increased trade of livestock and livestock products. The main goal of COFENABVI-AO is to represent the private sector voice in the elaboration of regional policies aimed at improving livestock trade within and across borders in West Africa. The specific objectives of COFENABVI-AO are:

- Improve the marketing channels for live animals and meat products along specific corridors
- Encourage state authorities' effective application of ECOWAS protocols on the free movement of persons and goods
- Defend the material and moral interests of the members of the confederation and maintain cooperative relationships between professional organizations, chambers of commerce, public and private organizations and development partners
- Participate in the development of national, sub-regional, and international policies influencing the livestock sector
- Increase the capacity of livestock value chains stakeholders
- Support the development and rehabilitation of infrastructure for livestock production, processing, and marketing
- Strengthen cooperation with veterinary services for better harmonization of animal health policies

With 60 million heads of cattle and 160 small ruminants (sheep and goats), West Africa stands out as a livestock region "par excellence." Livestock production and trading contribute significantly to food and income security for smallholder farmers; for pastoralists it is often the only source of income.

The livestock sector, inclusive of the value of the (human) labor force, meat, and by-products including organic manure, is estimated to contribute nearly 50% of West Africa's gross domestic product (GDP).

The cattle value chain alone contributes 10-25% of GDP in the Sahel countries. The cattle value chain is one of the largest in regional trade; it is a significant source of incomes, job creation and food security (Trade Hub and African Partners Network, 2014a). For these reasons, the Trade Hub has selected the livestock sector as a priority value chain to be supported under the project.

2.2.1.1 Relationship with USAID's ATP Project

The relationship between COFENABVI-AO and USAID-funded projects started in 2009, with technical and financial support provided under USAID's ATP project. From its inception in 2004 until 2009, the president of COFENABVI-AO financed all of the confederation's advocacy activities. The partnership with ATP emanated from an agricultural value chain analysis conducted by the USAID/ATP in 2008, which identified COFENABVI-AO as the project's key regional partner in the livestock/meat value chain. The collaborative framework established between ATP and COFENABVI-AO in June 2009 led to a series of activities aimed at developing regional trade in livestock and meat. ATP supported trainings on advocacy, provided technical assistance on abattoir management, animal fattening projects by women farmers, and helped finance the preparation of administration and financial management procedures for the confederation. With ATP support from the beginning of the project since 2009, COFENABVI-AO gained experience with USAID rules and requirements.

Between 2009 and 2012, ATP conducted four organizational capacity assessments with COFENABVI-AO using the Partner Institutional Viability Assessments (PIVA) tool. Similar to the OCA, the PIVA measures various areas of organizational capacity. The last PIVA was held in 2012 in Ouagadougou, and the results were used as the reference point for the OCA assessment conducted by the new Trade Hub in May 2014. At the OCA meeting with COFENABVI-AO's Deputy Secretary General in Ouagadougou, the conversation centered on progress in organizational capacity the organization had registered since the 2012 PIVA.

2.2.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

COFENABVI-AO has made considerable progress in its governance structure. Through a restructuring exercise in 2012, a Secretariat was established, leading to a much better information and communication flow within the confederation. There is now decentralized decision making, instead of the president in Abidjan being the sole decision maker. The confederation still faces with the challenge of limited information flowing from the base membership federations, with regards to their activities, membership statistics, production, and trade information.

The current management structure includes:

- Secretary General based in Mali
- Deputy Secretary General and an admin secretary based in Ouagadougou
- President and the Treasurer based in Abidjan.

The National Federation (NF) in Côte d'Ivoire provides administrative support to the president. ATP provided financial support for the salary of the Deputy Secretary General for six months. The NFs are in the process of organizing inter-professional associations that would contribute to increased membership. NFs pay subscription fees that support the confederation--CFA 500,000 ($1,032.54) one-time membership fee, plus CFA 500,000 ($1,032.54) as annual contributions. To date, all the NFs have paid such fees, with the exception of Guinea Bissau. Since COFENABVI-AO's mandate is to address the

problems faced by its members, and the body receives financial support from UEMOA and ECOWAS, COFENABVI-AO is required to include all member countries in the confederation. The confederation continues to seek assistance to finance its membership drive. To be eligible for membership, a national federation must have legal recognition in its respective country as an apex organization for several inter-professional associations. Only one representative organization per country is allowed by the confederation's constitution. COFENABVI-AO has seen an increase in the number of women's associations, especially in Bobo Dioulasso and Dara in western Burkina Faso. This development is part of a gender strategy, facilitated in large part by the government's promotion of and financial support to women farmers' cooperatives.

While financial resources have been a major challenge in the past, there has been significant improvement since 2012. Since then, the confederation has successfully diversified its donor base. Sources of financing now include CILSS, UEMOA, and ECOWAS, primarily to support the collection of information and cross-border trade statistics on livestock. ECOWAS is also funding a five-year project to support a membership drive and expansion into all member countries. In Burkina Faso, government funding is supporting the organization of women into cooperatives for small ruminant production. Plans are underway to recruit an accountant to be based in Abidjan for better management of financial resources.

COFENABVI-AO has achieved the most progress in the area of member services. Additional achievements include:

- Elaboration of regional policies to improve livestock trade
- Training of livestock value chain actors, especially small ruminant producers, in animal fattening and financial management to enable them capture market opportunities during the Muslim holiday of Tabaski (also known as Eid al-Adha)
- Successful advocacy against road harassment (e.g. between Mali and Senegal for ease of movement of animals), and successful campaign for a reduction in police checkpoints (from seven per country to three per country
- Ongoing advocacy for a reduction of taxes on live animals/animal on hoof: In Burkina Faso, meat is excluded from taxes, but animals on the hoof are heavily taxed. The Burkina Faso government aims to discourage the transportation of animals on the hoof because the lack of value addition, through slaughter, is considered a loss of revenue
- Completion of market research and support of market linkages across borders
- Launch of organizational web site (www.cofenabvi.org)

As the organization expands, it is broadening its external relations with continental research institutions like the AU-IBAR, with international development assistance institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), with ECOWAS, UEMOA, AU, CILSS, USAID and the European Union (EU). At the time of the assessment, COFENABVI-AO was working with the IDB on a project to develop livestock ranches equipped with forage and water systems in Mali, Burkina and Niger (for production), and construction of abattoirs at key market points in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire for cattle, and in Mali and Niger for camel meat. The aim of the project is to produce certified halal meat for export markets in the Gulf States.

Areas for Improvements

- Assuring sustainability of COFENABVI-AO must be done by acting at the base: Strengthening

capacities of national federations and member associations. COFENABVI-AO recognizes the critical need to build strong national federations and primary associations that are capable of paying the required fees and have the capacity to take up services offered by the confederation. From the Deputy Secretary General's perspective, strong organizational national associations will help resolve the problems of financing the confederation's activities, service delivery, and will support advocacy efforts at the country-specific level to remove trade barriers

- Support increased access to finance for members so they can improve performance
- Strengthen relations with regional organizations
- Increase visibility at state/government levels—engage with government policy and decision making for the livestock sector
- Increase visibility of the confederation, for more effective advocacy against road harassment (COFENABVI-AO is founding member of Borderless Alliance)
- Establish market information systems (MIS) for value chain actors
- Increase gender sensitivity, taking targeted actions (sensitization sessions, training on gender equity with emphasis on the role of women in the sector) at the location of the executives' offices of the national federations for greater involvement of women.

2.2.3 POTENTIAL AREAS OF TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

COFENABVI-AO can be categorized as an organization at the expanding stage of organizational development. The need still remains for COFENABVI-AO to increase its visibility at different levels in order to increase its membership, increase contributions as a means to becoming more independent and more sustainable. The organization should continue to establish partnerships and regularly liaise with regional organizations to build synergies. Even so, its stage of maturity offers an opportunity for the Trade Hub to collaborate with the confederation, providing support for achievements of mutual goals. The OCA findings revealed a major need and interest in producer organization development and capacity building.

Some priority areas for Trade Hub support are:

- **Institutional strengthening**: In particular, consolidate national federations to improve service delivery and increase members commitment to pay dues
- **Technical assistance and trainings**: Concentrate on contracting/contractual arrangements, commercial regulations on livestock marketing within the region and cold chain management
- **Capacity building for women**: Enable women to take an active role in the various links in the value chain, from production to marketing of livestock. Potential areas include livestock fattening and value-added transformation.

2.3 AFRICAN CASHEW ALLIANCE

2.3.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The African Cashew Alliance (ACA) is an industry alliance initiated in 2005 to capitalize on the cashew sector's growth and development potential. The 23 founding members include multinational retailers, private label companies, cashew trading companies, processors, regulating agencies, and development organizations, such as USAID and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ). Today, ACA has more than 195 members from all nodes of the cashew value chain from 26 countries around the world. ACA's mission is to foster a competitive African cashew industry through provision of technical assistance for all cashew actors, facilitating investments, forging market linkages, and disseminating information on best practices along the cashew value chain. The specific objectives of the ACA for the sector are to:

- Increase processing of raw cashew nuts (RCN) in Africa (current estimates are that less that 7% of African cashews are processed on the continent)
- Improve competitiveness and sustainability of all value chain actors
- Facilitate public-private partnerships in support of the cashew value chain.

Cashew supports the livelihoods of about 10 million people in rural Africa. Both the cashew apple and the nut are sold to generate income for cashew farmers and artisanal processors, the majority of whom are women. An estimated two million small farmer households (20%-30% of them female-headed) produce about 40% of the world's raw cashew nut crop. West Africa alone accounts for more than 30% of the world cashew crop. Côte d'Ivoire (380,000MT), Guinea-Bissau (150,000MT), Nigeria (100,000MT), and Benin (80,000MT) are, respectively, the second, fourth, seventh and ninth largest producers in the world. However, of the total production of raw cashew nuts, less than 10% is processed in the region, the vast majority being exported raw to India and Vietnam (Trade Hub and African Partners Network, 2014b). The low processing capacity and value addition for cashew nut represent a significant loss of revenue for the West Africa regions. Cashew processing and value addition offers considerable potential to create jobs and income, and promote food security. For this reason, the priority target for the ACA now is to support the development of a robust cashew processing sector in Africa, especially in the West Africa region. ACA has initiated steps towards this goal, and some accomplishments have been registered to date:

- More than $500 million in cashew sales facilitated between 2006 and 2012
- $90 million in new investments only in the past three years and 15,000 new jobs created
- Facilitated establishment of new cashew processing factories in the region, including the largest cashew factory in Africa.
- Hosting the annual international cashew conference: The 2012 conference in Cotonou, Benin was the largest cashew event in the world, with 520 participants from 36 countries
- ACA Quality Seal program implemented in nine countries, with five factories receiving seals of approval
- USAID officially awarded ACA with a Global Development Alliance (GDA) grant in April 2013. The funds will support a two-year program entitled "Leveraging Cashew Business for Poverty Reduction." Within the two-year time span of the project, ACA's work is expected to result in additional income of $10 million for rural communities and create 3,200 new jobs in the cashew industry

2.3.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

Overall, ACA has in place management systems essential for good organizational practice. Analyses of the OCA findings show specific areas of strengths. ACA has sound financial management systems in place. Accounting policies exist and financial records are regularly available to members. Budgeting regularly involves all the member alliances, from the preparation up to board approval. Internal and external audits are conducted annually. Because of past experiences with USAID funding, they are familiar with United States Government (USG) funding requirements. Appropriate administrative procedures are documented and updated as necessary.

With respect to project management, ACA has developed a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) which is an integrated component of USAID and ACA's program implementation management system. Additionally, ACA is guided by a clearly defined strategic plan that reflects its mission. Progress has been made in the area of human resources management; all staff members have work plans with clearly stated goals. ACA holds regular democratic elections, with 2012 being the most recent elections during which the Board was changed.

ACA places a high priority on service provision for its members. Technical assistance is provided to cashew processors on business management, market linkages, and technical capacity building and training. Investments in the African cashew industry are facilitated through a variety of services, including banks and other financial institutions. ACA enjoys diversified partnerships both regionally and internationally.

A proactive MIS is in place to ensure effective monitoring of the cashew market, processing, and production trends. ACA's MIS employs a number of resources to obtain, analyze and disseminate information on market status and relevant developments in the cashew industry. The ACA MIS generates different products, for example:

- **AfricashewSplits**: A weekly price and market update report for Africa, India, Brazil, and Vietnam. The weekly report gives a quick update on market activity including price trends for the various cashew grades, production and processing info, weather conditions and institutional activity in the production countries. The SMS component of this report (Africashewbits) usually captures the kernel and RCN prices in India, Vietnam, and Brazil, when available
- **Africashew450**: A monthly market analysis of production trends, providing information on price trends, market activities and provides general information in the African cashew markets within the course of the month
- **Africashew240**: ACA's annual report, which contains financial statements of past year and projections for the coming year
- **AfricashewBB**: a mobile application for market information data broadcasting, currently under development.

Some challenges remain for ACA to resolve. Financial sustainability is a high risk area, because 60% financing comes from private sector. Absence of an efficient asset inventory and management tool, plus insufficient number of staff with the requisite technical and managerial skills staff to manage all their activities is another area of weakness.

2.3.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

ACA is a well on the way towards becoming a mature organization with sound systems in place to support organizational growth. Nonetheless, there remain important areas where improvements are still needed. Discussions between ACA and the TH-CBT focused on specific capacity strengthening needs that ACA had already identified, and for which they were anticipating support from the Trade Hub. The anticipated support would enable ACA strengthen the various organizational management systems needed for effective implementation of the technical projects they are planning to embark on for the benefit of their members. Specifically, ACA would benefit from Trade Hub assistance to strengthen organizational capacities in key areas, including:

- Human resources management: training staff on business plan development, project performance management;
- Training on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and managing market information systems;
- Improved business services delivery especially through technical assistance for cashew processors to access to finance and investment support.

2.4 BORDERLESS ALLIANCE

2.4.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The idea for the creation of the Borderless Alliance emerged in 2010, out of a convergence of separate advocacy, trade, and transport activities implemented under the previous WATH project. In May 2012, Borderless was officially launched as an institution with the mandate to continue the advocacy work of WATH. Now, the organization has evolved from an advocacy campaign to become the region's leading institutional platform for trade and transport facilitation. Borderless has a current membership of 74 large private sector companies, SMEs, to multinational corporations, value chain associations, and public agencies. Borderless' mission is three-dimensional: advocacy for the removal of transport barriers, provision of trade information, and promotion of investment in the region.

Borderless has a governance structure that is representative of its membership profile: the General Assembly is comprised of the current 74 members, and a nine-member Executive Committee is elected for two years and meets twice a year. The Borderless Alliance Executive Secretariat is based in Accra with nine staff members managing activities. All the staff members, with the exception of the Executive Director, are former WATH staff. Borderless national chapters or committees exist in nine countries: Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Borderless is currently reviewing plans to expand into Guinea Conakry, The Gambia, and Sierra Leone. National committees identify country-specific issues that feed into Borderless' advocacy efforts. Additionally, there are seven Trade Advisors posted at the Border Information Centers (BICs), with responsibility to conduct surveys, collect data, and support Borderless' in-country activities. The BIC is one of Borderless' key activities; BICs are currently found at the following borders: Ghana-Côte D'Ivoire (Noe and Elubo); Ghana-Togo (Aflao), Benin-Nigeria (Krake & Seme), Ghana-Burkina (Paga & Darkola), and at the port of Dakar.

2.4.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

Borderless is recognized regionally, and thus receives support from UEMOA, CILSS, and ECOWAS, primarily for data collection on trade and transport issues in the region. Borderless has signed an MOU with ECOWAS, making them a part of the family and eligible for funding support. Borderless participates in ECOWAS events and is a member of the ECOWAS Trade Liberation Scheme (ETLS) task force. Since its inception, Borderless has expanded beyond advocacy and now implements other activities such as operation of the BICs, road governance, and promoting investments through business to business (B2B) forums.

As a membership organization, Borderless is committed to providing services to its members. Borderless strives for responsiveness to members' needs and has registered some successes. For example, Borderless was requested by Unilever, Nestle, and DHL to support professionalization of drivers and trucking companies, so they would focus on production and outsource transport from factory to markets. Borderless has since developed a driver's guide and is in the process of developing training programs for drivers and exploring investments for specialization in the transport industry. In another case, Borderless assisted Nestle to regain ETLS eligibility after the company was disqualified due to a slight change in the formulation of one its products. Borderless produces a monthly newsletter that keeps members abreast of developments in regional trade and transport. In the area of road governance, Borderless monitors major trade routes, collects data, prepares quarterly reports and works with local shippers' councils and chambers of commerce to engage in advocacy activities. One of their successes in road governance is in Togo, where police and military checkpoints have been reduced, consistent with the 2006 requirement from UEMOA that maximum three checkpoints should be allowed along trade transport routes. While Borderless is not working on a tangible product (these information and services are not tangible) their work is essential because, as the Executive Secretary claimed, "production is useless if products cannot move from point A to B."

The main strength of Borderless is its high-profile visibility and recognition by private sector and regional economic institutions. This recognition has resulted in Borderless developing a broad partnership which increases the potential for sustainable financing. BA has existing partnerships with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ECOWAS, USAID, Department for International Development (DFID), and AFDB (AFDB funded the establishment of three BICs). The regional institutions are keen on Borderless because of alignment with their regional integration agenda. Borderless has also received direct grants from USAID, about $150,000 which was used to produce the driver's guide, conduct caravans and axle load meetings, and to fund the recent BIC meeting in Abidjan, Mali, and Dakar.

Another area of strength is membership willingness to pay annual dues, which range from $400 for SMEs, $1000 for regional associations, to $2000 for multinationals. Such willingness is due to the direct benefits to members in the form of information access for members own use, but also the indirect benefits that Borderless promotes. Activities contribute to improvement of overall trade/enabling environment and all. At the moment, Borderless offers no fee-based services for its members. But members willingly pay to attend Borderless conferences and other events.

In terms of organizational management, Borderless has all the systems in place: grants manuals, clearly defined financial management procedures, an online directory of members, and a rich informative website that receives high traffic. The current complement of staff are all former WATH employees, another area of strength for it has allowed for continuity, but also refinement in Borderless activities due to the institutional memories.

Among the main weaknesses and challenges faced by the Borderless are:

- **Insufficiency of membership dues to meet the full running costs of the secretariat and the BICs**: Borderless is still dependent on donor funding; they need UEMOA and ECOWAS support to continue activities. It should be noted that Borderless does not sell any products or services to generate income. They try to resolve the financial challenges through maintaining efficient financial management of scarce resources.
- **Limited support to national committees because of lack of resources**: The need is great to improve effectiveness. Although national committees represent Borderless, their priorities are in-country activities unrelated to Borderless. The solution they have identified is to offer fee-based services, for example, building the National Committees' capacity for fundraising and training drivers/professionalization, which would increase their effectiveness.
- **At the level of the Secretariat, the team needs to be strengthened**: There is need for additional staff, but this requires resolving the issue of how salaries will be paid given the financial challenges faced by Borderless. Additionally, transportation is a huge problem; they have none at the moment, so to move around to visit the BICs, Borderless depends on car rentals, which is expensive. At the moment there is no dedicated M&E staff. To address these weaknesses, Borderless needs training for current staff to be more efficient and build capacity in project management, supply chain management, human resources management, fundraising/advancement, M&E, and information systems/technology.

2.4.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COLLABORATION WITH THE TRADE HUB

Borderless has shared with the Trade Hub a matrix of proposed activities through September 2014. The Trade, Transport and Enabling Environment (TTEE) team is already working with Borderless on some of the proposed activities. One area of collaboration is for the Trade Hub to support Borderless in its plans to hand off the BICs to host institutions in their respective countries, as a way to ensure sustainability. This, however, requires strengthening the BICs to be prepared for effective uptake of full responsibilities. Another area of collaboration is to support the membership expansion drive of Borderless into all ECOWAS countries.

2.5 RESEAU DES SYSTEMES D'INFORMATION DES MARCHES EN AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

2.5.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The idea of establishing a network of national market information system emerged during a CILSS meeting in 1999 in Conakry, Republic of Guinea. *Reseau des Systems d'Information des Marches en Afrique de l'Ouest* (RESIMAO) was created in Bamako, Mali, in 2000 with six initial members (Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Guinea, and Benin).

The West African Market information Systems Network (WAMIS-Net in English) has become the main network for MIS for agricultural products in West Africa that is composed entirely of public systems. RESIMAO now covers 10 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte-d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, and Togo), and gathers information on many periodic markets. Data are usually collected on a wide range of foodstuffs that play an important role in ensuring food and nutrition

security for the people. The objective of RESIMAO is to contribute to food security and poverty reduction and seeks to promote regional trade. In particular, RESIMAO seeks to facilitate better commercial decision-making by all stakeholders, by providing them equitable access to strategic information through an effective management and communication of factual data and information.

RESIMAO's main activities include the following.

- Collecting and disseminating up-to-date information delivered on markets parameters (prices, quantities, flows, etc.) through publication of weekly prices directories and by monitoring permanently the agricultural markets
- Conducting studies on agricultural products and food security
- Gathering and disseminating information on business opportunities
- Linking traders by exchanging price data via the Internet, radio, print, email, and SMS.

2.5.2 DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

For now, RESIMAO is organized as a network of public MIS without any dedicated staff or Secretariat. The current management of RESIMAO is dispersed across member countries, with officers who are also responsible for the MIS of their respective countries. The main body implementing RESIMAO's activities is the "*Cellule Opérationelle*" and it is constituted as follows:

- **Coordinator**: Based in Bamako, Mali, and also coordinator of the national MIS for Mali
- **Vice Coordinator**: Based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, also responsible for the national market information lodged within the *Office d'Aide à la Commercialisation des Produits Vivriers (OCPV)* under the Ministry of Commerce
- **General Secretary**: Coordinator of the public MIS for Senegal
- **Treasurer**: Coordinator of the national MIS for Niger.

The technical arm of RESIMAO is called "*Groupe TIC*" and is formed by all the Information Technology (IT) experts of the 10 member countries. There are no women in the "*Cellule Opérationelle*" but the IT units include women. The network is currently reorganizing based on the approved organizational structure in their new action plan.

With support from ECOWAS and the IFDC MIR Plus project, RESIMAO developed a five-year strategic plan (2013-2018), which provides the roadmap for the network's activities. RESIMAO has already received a financial commitment, in the form of a signed MOU, from ECOWAS for $600,000 over five years. Release of the funds is pending RESIMAO's establishment of a Secretariat. However, RESIMAO lacks the funds to establish a Secretariat on their own. They are currently in discussions with ECOWAS to release part of the fund to help RESIMAO establish the secretariat.

The strength of RESIMAO resides in the network being constituted by national information systems that are supported by governments of the member countries. This assures sustainability of the network. RESIMAO argues that with new information technologies public MIS are equally, if not more, efficient than private sector market information systems, and more sustainable. A modern web platform with mobile capability was developed in 2013 with the support from ECOWAS, IFDC, and the USAID's ATP project, but it is yet to become operational. Through a partnership with the IFDC MIR plus, RESIMAO now has a component on agro-input market information data collection. RESIMAO has strong

experience in data collection and dissemination/diffusion, and maintains a database on price information time series of more than 10 years.

The main weakness of RESIMAO is the lack of resources, both financial and human. The network is largely dependent on donor support for activities it wants to implement that would be of benefit to all member countries. This includes attending international conferences that may be of interest to the wider network; the executive relies on donor support. Another area of weakness is the disparity in capacities among national systems, in terms of maturity, financing, and services provided. Most public MIS are polyvalent, not only covering multiple agricultural commodities; but officers also perform other functions beyond information collection. In some countries, for example in Mali, the market information system is an autonomous body, with its own budget; in Côte d'Ivoire, it is housed within the OCPV, doing other functions not related to MIS, and without its own budget, but is part of a global institutional budget. The OPCV MIS component, for instance, has seven people at the head office, plus 40 in the field, who in addition to information gathering, are also involved in market support, farmer training, and other responsibility as assigned. These differences have a diluting effect on the performance of the network. Lack of equipment (e.g., computers, internet access, instruments for data collection) affects the collection and transmission of data from the field to the main offices, and timely analysis and dissemination to end-users.

2.5.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COLLABORATION WITH THE TRADE HUB

RESIMAO has identified key areas in which the network wants to strengthen capacity and grow. RESIMAO is interested in going beyond just price information collection and dissemination. They want to expand services to include collecting information on trade volumes and forging market linkages. There are plans to improve information dissemination mechanisms, through the use of multiple technologies (e.g., tablets, cellphone, radio, TV, GIS, internet, bulletin, SMS). The establishment of a dedicated RESIMAO Secretariat with Executive Secretary and staff is also a priority. The Secretariat would be co-located within one of the national MIS.

Because of its regional scope, RESIMAO can contribute to increased intra-regional trade of agricultural products through the dissemination of timely market information. However, to be effective in this regard, the network would require capacity strengthening in many areas. The 2013-2018 strategic plan outlines specific areas of need that the Trade Hub could support.

2.6 ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AGROEXPORTS

2.6.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The Association of African Agro Export (AAFEX) was initiated by African private enterprises/companies and exporters of value-added agro products who frequently met at various international trade forums. AAFEX was eventually launched in 2002, with the objective to find solutions to common problems faced by these companies, especially in the area of financing and product quality. The main goals of AAFEX are to increase competitiveness of enterprises, through improvements in quality, increased commercialization, institutional strengthening and greater access to financing. The current membership is 114 exporters in 16 Sub-Sahara African countries, with the majority in West Africa.

AAFEX is governed by a General Assembly of 114 members, and a Board (*Conseil d'Administration*) composed of 23 enterprises, and representatives of each member country. At the management at the headquarters in Dakar, Senegal, consists of the following:

- **President**
- **Vice President 1**: Responsible for the national chapters
- **Vice President 2**: Responsible for strategy directions and fundraising
- **Executive Secretariat**: Seven staff and three technicians responsible for administration, finance, quality control, communications, and managing the pool of consultants on the AAFEX database.

Membership to AAFEX is open to companies that are formalized and legally registered companies. New members must be nominated by current members, and due diligence is performed before acceptance. A mandatory annual financial contribution is based on company turnover. Members pay a subscription fee to join. AAFEX conducts membership drive through information sessions conducted by the national chapters, newsletter, and exhibition at trade fairs.

AAFEX implements a range of programs, all of which are free to subscribed members. Programs are need-based and demand-driven, based on what will benefit members. AAFEX provides institutional support, technical assistance, trainings on quality improvement and commercialization. Programs are funded through membership contributions, which represent 30% of budget; donor funding for specific projects and activities account for 70% of the budget.

2.6.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

The association's main strength is its membership profile. As an organization of private sector companies, its financial and institutional sustainability is assured, so long as it continues to provide relevant services for its members. One area of accomplishment is the wide dissemination /reach of their services. "A program requested by and for one company can be disseminated among many countries and companies," according to the Executive Secretary. A good example is their involvement in the African Food Tradition Revisited by Research (AFTER) program, a research and development collaboration among multiple research institutions in west and southern Africa, France and the UK. This program is conducting studies on fermented cereal-based foods, driven by needs identified in collaboration with AAFEX member companies. AAFEX will disseminate findings across their membership.

AAFEX has developed a strategic plan, which emphasizes activities that would make the association more financially stable and sustainable. They are exploring the kinds of fee-based services they would offer to members and non-members alike. Plans are underway to recruit a finance expert who would focus on improving access to financing for AAFEX members. AAFEX has already initiated this effort through the establishment of CEDEXSA. (This something the Trade Hub could support under its grant mechanism.) The association is also looking into developing a program on contracting between processing companies and raw material suppliers. This is an opportunity for collaboration with the Trade Hub value chain program through WAGN.

2.6.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

AAFEX is exploring partnership with the Trade Hub to focus on activities that would strengthen its technical programming. Specific areas include: Quality, grades and standards improvement; product commercialization; value chain development through forward contracting agreements between suppliers of raw materials and processors; improving access to finance by member companies, to enable them stock raw materials in quantity and allow continuous production; and developing a communications strategy, which would promote consumption of locally processed, value-added food items.

An important area for the Trade Hub-AAFEX collaboration is in the project's proposed mango value chain development program. This was a point of discussion during a visit made to the Trade Hub office in Accra by the Executive Director of AAFEX and the Ghana Chapter representative. AAFEX has an ongoing program in Ghana and Cameroon that is addressing problems of quality, fruit-fly and anthracnose infestation in mangoes. The program will support mange value chain actors in the two countries to meet Globalgap certification and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points standards. AAFEX has received UEMOA and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) support for this activity. Currently, no regional mango industry organization exists, only national associations. The Trade Hub has an opportunity to work with AAFEX to facilitate the creation of an umbrella organization, starting with strengthening county-level inter-professional associations that would lead the formal establishment of the regional association.

2.7 AGENCE SENEGALAISE DE PROMOTION DES EXPORTATIONS – AGOA RESOURCE CENTER

2.7.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The *Agence Sénégalaise de Promotion des Exportations* (ASEPEX) – Senegal's Export Promotion Agency – was created February 15, 2005 by decree n° 2005-108 by the Government of Senegal. The agency is self-managed and is under the Ministry of Commerce, Entrepreneurship and Informal Sector.

ASEPEX's objectives are to create an enabling business environment and act as a facilitator by providing an integrated platform of services, information, and training to exporters. ASEPEX also provides services to support the promotion of products and export-ready companies through trade regional and international fairs and tradeshows. Finally, ASEPEX provides technical assistance to companies on issues of norms, quality in collaboration with a network of international partners (EU, AFD, International Trade Center, and the Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries.

Since 2008, ASEPEX partnered with WATH to host the AGOA Resource Center (ARC), in an effort to provide information and technical assistance to exporters that want to take advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The ARC acts as a focal point to sensitize the private sector to AGOA opportunities, and provides technical and business linkage assistance to companies that want to export to the United States and other international markets.

Since the establishment of the ARC at ASEPEX, the Coordinator of the Resource Center has worked closely with the previous office of WATH to support the export-ready companies that were identified and supported for tradeshow participation.

2.7.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

The strength of ASEPEX resides in a clear understanding of its mandate and an organizational structure that is relevant to the realization of its vision and objectives. Its operations are overseen by a Board of four representatives: Representatives come from the President's office, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Commerce, as well as representatives from the private sector (Chamber of Commerce, private business organizations), and these representatives meet on a quarterly basis. The Managing Director of the Agency is appointed by decree by the President of the Republic. ASEPEX also has a Financial Control Department as well as an Accounting Department to supervise the use of funds received from the Government.

ASEPEX's main weakness is in the availability of funds to carry out its activities. The budgetary process is cumbersome, and the agency receives funding quite late, which prevents it from carrying out and achieving the results stated in its work plan.

The ARC is connected to the government department in charge of export and trade facilitation, and the ARC is managed by a coordinator who is also responsible for managing the workload related to the review of Certificates of Origin delivered by ASEPEX. The ARC previously received equipment support (one computer and printer) from the previous WATH, and does not have a set budget to perform outreach to the business community despite an annual work plan with a budget. The ARC is a standalone operation with just material support from the agency. The ARC currently acts as an information point where some companies inquire about AGOA, the rules and regulations for exporting under AGOA, and try to identify buyers. Under the current framework, the scope and scale of activities of the ARC are quite limited, given the fact that the Coordinator is busy with many other tasks, and does not have funding to provide assistance and training to companies.

2.7.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

There are vast opportunities for collaboration between the new Trade Hub and the ARC at ASEPEX if the objectives of the ARC are redesigned, and if it has a set budget to carry out outreach and training activities to targeted businesses. The proposed plan to fully utilize the ARC is to transform it into an effective Trade Resource Center (TRC) with business advisory services to the business communities. The new role of the TRCs will be to enhance the competitiveness of exports by championing relationships with export-ready companies and providing advisory and business linkages services.

More specifically, the new TRCs should support the Trade Hub in the following:

- Identify companies and assess their export readiness for regional or international trade, and provide assistance to build strong national sectoral associations to enhance the competitiveness of selected value chains;
- Provide technical assistance and training to better address issues (e.g., packaging, financing, tradeshow preparation, etc.) that contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of selected value chains;
- Support the institutional enabling environment framework (local agencies that promote trade, or alliances such as Borderless) to enhance regional trade or exports.

Recommendations

- Define a new role and specific objectives and services that the Resource Center can deliver to the business community;
- Identify a new collaborative framework with the host institutions to promote buy-in and contribution to make the Resource Center more effective and sustainable.
- Provide technical capacity building in the form of training on trade and export to the Resource Center coordinator and host institution staff.

2.8 ASSOCIATION POUR LA PROMOTION DES EXPORTATIONS DE COTE D'IVOIRE (APEX-CI)—AGOA RESOURCE CENTER

2.8.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The Association for the Promotion of Exports of Côte D'Ivoire (APEX-CI) is the host institution for the AGOA Resource Center (ARC) in Abidjan. APEX-CI was established in 1996 as a public-private sector partnership to promote exports of Ivorian products globally. The association has various programs structured around themes linked to specific business strategic units (BSU) that are in turn linked to strategic partnerships. The AGOA Resource Center (ARC) is a BSU under the theme Cote d'Ivoire/USA Business Initiatives, along with the AGOA Commission, MCC National Committee, and US-Cote d'Ivoire Business Council. The associated strategic partnerships include the USTR, USAID/WATH, American private sector, the Ivorian private sector, and several Ivorian government agencies. The ARC is one of the key elements of the APEX-CI taskforce, Back to AGOA.

APEX-CI is a well-known entity, a private sector association with strong backing from the Ivorian government and its technical ministries (Agriculture, Trade, Industry), and attractive to donor funding. The association is currently implementing projects on improving competitiveness of small and medium enterprises funded by the World Bank and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). APEX-CI is also funded by membership fees and offering fee-based services.

APEX-CI has a mandate from the government of Cote d'Ivoire to provide direct support to exporters through the integrated functions of providing commercial information, facilitating access to global markets, lobbying for trade financing, and participating in trade fairs. In this respect, the APEX-CI provided leadership in the process for Côte d'Ivoire (CI) to gain AGOA eligibility in 2002 and 2011. (At the time of the OCA assessment, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was working on the AGOA renewal application for CI to be submitted at the 2014 AGOA Forum.) The role of APEX-CI is to enable Côte d'Ivoire to exploit the opportunities offered by AGOA and provide expertise that would enable private sector companies to access international and American markets. In 2012, APEX-CI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USAID/West Africa Trade Hub, which resulted in the establishment of the AGOA Resource Center. The ARC was inaugurated on May 30 2012, for the primary purpose of facilitating access to American markets by Ivorian enterprises.

2.8.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGNAIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

The AGOA Resource Center is a business strategic unit department recognized under the AGOA Commission of the government of Cote d'Ivoire. This institutional location within a public-private sector partnership is a major advantage for the ARC, because it guarantees political and financial support, and therefore sustainability. In support of its AGOA mission to facilitate exports to US markets, APEX-CI has set up a one-stop shop at their Abidjan head office named *Bureau de la Valeur*

d'origine AGOA (BUVOA). Three fully equipped offices have been allocated for, respectively, the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Industry, and Customs. But the offices are yet to be occupied; APEX-CI is waiting for officers to be deployed to the BUVOA.

The AGOA Resource Center located at the APEX-CI head office is clearly identifiable as a business unit. It is staffed by a manager, an assistant manager, and two research assistants. The center is fully equipped with computers, library, and a seminar room. In 2013 the ARC registered 632 visitors, majority of them companies and individuals seeking information on how to export to the United States. All visitors to the center complete a form designed by the ARC in which they provide contact details and business activities. Visitors also fill out the USAID/WATH export-readiness questionnaire. The information collected goes into a database, which the ARC uses to design and tailor capacity building activities for the various sectors. The database is also available online, for ease of access by interested buyers overseas; information from the database is also diffused in-country via SMS.

The activities conducted by the ARC are primarily:

- Advice to enterprises or individuals seeking information about the American market;
- Monthly training and information exchange sessions around specific themes of interest to market actors;
- Monthly visit by ARC staff to at least one enterprise to evaluate their capacity to export;
- Demand-based tailored trainings on specific topics for personnel of enterprises engage in international trade; this consultancy is paid for by the company;
- Forging market linkages;
- Exhibitions of Ivorian products for visitors to the center.

The ARC's is engaged generally in capacity building activities with emphasis on product quality improvements, packing and presentation, requirement of US markets, market linkages, and information access. These activities respond to issues faced by would-be exporters such as: insufficient and inconsistent volumes; limited exposure and access to US markets, especially for ethnic foods; and poor access to market information. Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs), majority of which are women-owned business involved in transformation of ethnic foods, are the dominant users of the services offered by the ARC.

In partnership with the previous WATH, the APEX-CI ARC implemented tailored activities for actors in the textile, agro-food, handicrafts, Shea, and cashew industries. In the textile industry, the ARC held weekly seminars for SMEs, and supported exchange visits with Ghanaian textile companies. Through matching grants, agro-food industries were assisted to participate at the Fancy food shows. A WATH-sponsored conference on handicrafts brought together producers, buyers, and the Ministry of Trade, Craft, and SME Promotion. This led to the emergence of handicraft consolidators, which was a crucial missing link in the value chain. The ARC and value chain actors also participated in conferences of the Global Shea Alliance (GSA), and received technical assistance on improved processing techniques.

Likewise in the cashew sector, the WATH/APEX-CI partnership sponsored workshops and technical assistance on nut quality standards and processing. Cote d'Ivoire is the number one producer of raw cashew nut in Africa, but processes only about seven percent of its production. A program to support industrialization of the cashew industry, notably to increase processing and transformation capacity in-country is being developed by the government and APEX-CI. The 10-year civil unrest in the country was unfavorable to investment in the cashew sector, but the return to normalcy is attracting investors once

again. The cashew sector will be a major focus for APEX-CI and the ARC going forward. They recently completed a study of 250 SMEs in the agro-industries, and have identified 60 with potential to export that they'll work with. (APEX-CI will share the study report once finalized.)

The ARC hosted by APEX-CI is one of the best functioning centers visited during the OCA assessment. It enjoys an institutional home that assures sustainable financing, as long as the host itself is financially viable. Like all organizations, APEX-CI has its financial challenges, which are also manifested in the ARC. Available financial resources are always insufficient to support all the programs and activities they need to carry out. Therefore, external funding is always being sought, as part of a fundraising strategy.

2.8.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

The management of the ARC identified several areas where the Trade Hub could support it become more effective and efficient in its service delivery functions. Specific capacity building assistance interests include the following.

- Support the ARC with technical assistance o increase knowledge on how the US market works;
- Facilitate a "logistics" platform with US distributors for the ARC to conduct trial exports;
- Co-sponsor a study on distribution networks for African ethnic foods in the US;
- Train of ARC staff on market research, information analysis, and diffusion;
- Provide orientation for ARC staff about the Trade Hub and what the project expects from its ARC partners;
- For the respective sectors and value chains, support the ARC implement practical capacity building programs: examples—drying wood for handicrafts; HAACCP certification; participation in trade shows to improve knowledge of different markets and incentivize improvements in quality and competitiveness.

2.9 GAMBIA INVESTMENT AND EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCY—AGOA RESOURCE CENTER

2.9.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) is government institution under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration, and Employment. Its chief mandate is the promotion of investments in the Gambia and exports of Gambian products to regional and international markets. The Gambia became AGOA eligible in December of 2002. Unfortunately, local companies have yet to make any significant gains from AGOA, for several reasons: a general lack of awareness about AGOA and its benefits for Gambian companies and exporters; major issues with quality, grades and standards; low capacity to export to US markets, among others. GIEPA has been working with the American Embassy and the American Chamber of Commerce in the Gambia to raise awareness of AGOA through "AGOA Business Bootcamps" for SMEs. GIEPA has over 7000 SMEs across the county registered with them.

2.9.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

GIEPA has hosted the Gambia AGOA Resource Center since 2011, when the center moved from its original home at the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The previous West Africa Trade supported the center with one computer, furniture, and resource materials. The ARC is integrated into the programs of the Business and Export Development (BED) Department, with direct reporting line to the Executive Director. The Director of the BED is the AGOA focal point and provides supervision of the BED officer in charge of the ARC. At the moment, the ARC is not managed by a dedicated a staff, but is included in the overall portfolio of the Business and Export Development Officer.

The AGOA Resource Center was established to perform the following functions:

- Develop a standard export guide that will spell out all required steps one has to take in order to successfully export from the Gambia;
- Educate businesses on the list of eligible export products under AGOA and the practical steps involving documentation guidelines such as completion of commercial invoices, packaging lists, and certificates;
- Undertake advocacy on matters crucial to export and trade development;
- Provide technical assistance in the area of assessing export-readiness of local companies;
- Provide advice and support businesses with targeted industry-specific and market regulatory information;
- Assist local companies in their preparations to participate in international trade shows and exhibitions; and
- Facilitate visits by investors from the US interested in tapping investment and export opportunities in the Gambia.

The ARC, however, is still in its early stages of development, and is grappling with several issues affecting its effectiveness as a trade information center.

- Insufficient funding to implement activities;
- Low visitation because of limited awareness of its existence;
- Lack of a dedicated manager and staff to conduct outreach, conduct export-readiness assessments, develop and maintain database of companies;
- Poorly equipped—there's only one computer available for the use of the center manager;

2.9.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

To address some of the problems faced and to support Gambian companies take advantage of AGOA, GIEPA has developed a strategic plan for managing the ARC. The components of the plan include:

- Provide information and raise awareness through various events such as seminar/workshops with partner organizations/institutions (e.g. AGOA Days; sectoral workshops; and export strategy workshops; Newspapers, TV/Radio forums and GIEPA Newsletter);
- Foster linkages between Gambian businesses and U.S. companies;
- Identify companies for possible participation in trade shows;
- Provide technical assistance to businesses with company profiles, marketing materials, Web sites;

- Provide technical assistance including expert advice/counseling and visit companies to conduct export readiness assessments.

2.10 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUTRY, BURKINA FASO (CCI-BF)—AGOA RESOURCE CENTER

2.10.1 HISTORY AND RATIONALE

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso (CCI-BF) is a public institution that was created June 11, 1948, with a consultative, representative, and administrative mandate to support the Burkinabe private sector. CCI-BF offers a range of information, business, legal advisory services, business creation and trade facilitation.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-BF) is well governed with a General Assembly, a Consular Bureau, eight Commissions and a General Directorate. CCI-BF is well funded, with 70% of its resources constituted by revenues from its various services and management of trade-related infrastructure. The ARC is managed by the Private Sector Support Department and collaborates closely with the Documentation Center located at the *Maison de l'Entreprise*, a program initiated by the World Bank and created in 2002. The *Maison de l'Entreprise*, in close collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso (CCI-BF), provides a range of competitive services to business and private sector associations.

2.10.2 DISCUSSION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

Since 2005, CCI-BF collaborated with the Trade Hub to set up an AGOA Resource Center that was enhanced in December 2011 with a Trade Advisor to support trade development and exports. In June 2013, CCI-BF was able to retain and integrate the Trade Advisor in its Private Sector Support Department. The ARC noted some successes in promoting exports of cashew and shea to the U.S. by:

- Identifying and providing technical assistance in the area of assessing export-readiness of local companies;
- Providing advice and support businesses with targeted industry-specific and market regulatory information;
- Assisting Burkinabe companies in their preparations to participate in international trade shows and exhibitions.

2.10.3 POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRADE HUB CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

To improve the level of technical assistance provided by the ARC, the Trade Advisor has developed a work plan that emphasize the following components:

- Identify key companies in targeted sectors (cashews and shea, and processed foods) and provide targeted training on food export regulations, export documentation;
- Liaise with alliances to foster international business linkages, as well as regional trade;
- Liaise with the Ministry of Commerce for the implementation of the National Export Strategy.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The organizational capacity assessments provided an opportunity for the Trade Hub team to learn about the range of partners the project intends to work with. Equally, it gave the partners a chance to reflect on their performance in the areas of governance, operations/administration, human resources management, financial management, organizational management, program management, and project performance management, but more importantly, on their sustainability. Overall, the OCA enabled a genuine exchange of ideas, while establishing a solid basis for collaboration between the Trade Hub and partners.

The key recommendation from the assessment is that the Trade Hub should continue with the organizations originally identified in the proposal. With tailored support from the Trade Hub, each would contribute to achieving the objectives of the Trade Hub, because interests, goals and abilities are aligned with those of the project. Investment of Trade Hub resources for capacity building support, whether technical, financial, or institutional, into any of these organizations should yield high rates of return. Granted the various organizations are at different stages of development, the Trade Hub has an immense opportunity for impact by strengthening the partners to take on the role of drivers of growth in trade within and outside of West Africa.

3.1 RECOMMENDED PARTNERS

Based on the results of the OCA, the Trade Hub proposes to work with the following organizations:

- **WAGN**, as the lead private sector organization to support our value chain work. WAGN's young stage of development is actually an advantage to the Trade Hub, in the sense that the project can guide the network towards gaining organizational viability through capacity development support for more effective and efficient governance, operations, administration, human resources management, financial management, organizational management, program management, project performance management, and overall sustainability.
- **COFENABVI-AO**, as the lead private sector organization for the livestock value chain component.
- **ACA**, as the industry lead for the cashew value chain interventions. The Alliance has submitted to the Trade Hub a concept note specifying areas of collaboration and potential Trade Hub assistance.
- **AAFEX**, particularly for work proposed in the mango value chain.
- **Borderless Alliance**, to maximize and scale up gains already made in improved cross-border trade and transport.
- **RESIMAO**, as the only public market information system network, can be supported to broaden engagement with the private sector, especially those in the project's focus value chains.
- **AGOA Resource Centers**, Trade Hub will support the ARCs, by helping them transition to become comprehensive Trade Resource Centers that can provide advice and information on

opportunities for regional trade (packaging, financing, SPS rules, export documentation, tradeshow preparation, etc.) , for exports generally, and maintain support for AGOA-eligible products. Trade Hub will also continue to support particular ARCs which have potential but are facing challenges, such as for example, the recent situation in Conakry where the Chamber of Commerce had lapsed in its obligations regarding salary. In this instance Trade hub was able to continue support initiated by USAID WA, and assist in helping the GOG to prepare documentation for approval of their Textile Exports Visa in the AGOA framework

Although the TH-CBT was unable to conduct an OCA exercise with GSA during this first round, the exercise will be scheduled for a later date. The Trade Hub anticipates supporting GSA on specific opportunities as identified by the GSA and the Trade Hub.

3.2 THEMATIC AREAS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

Analysis of OCA findings showed some common themes and needs for organizational capacity strengthening across the different partner organizations.

- **Membership Expansion**: An expanded membership base is seen as a way to promote the financial sustainability of the organization. Among the membership value chain associations, WAGN, COFENABVI, and ACA expressed that expanding and strengthening their membership bases is a priority need. Likewise, the Borderless Alliance and RESIMAO expressed interest in expanding their presence to all ECOWAS countries and attracting new members capable of meeting their financial obligations to the organization.
- **Strengthening Management Systems**: This is a consistent need across all the partner organizations.
- **Capacity Building and Training**: All partners consistently expressed a need for training, and this included improving business practices (for member private sector enterprises and companies), to increasing efficiency in management (for staff members at the head office level), to specific technical and productive domains related to the individual organizations' mandates.

3.3 NEXT STEPS

The Trade Hub will review the strategic development and action plans collected from the various partners and identify areas short- and long-term capacity building support interventions. It is anticipated that some short-term activities could be completed for during the four months left of FY14.

ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ASSESSMENT

TERMS OF REFERENCE
TRADE HUB NETWORK PROJECT

PARTNER SELECTION AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Introduction
USAID West Africa's strategic goal is to support the emergence of a politically stable and economically prosperous West Africa. The Trade Hub and African Partner's Network Project's goals are to promote increased Regional Trade in Key Agricultural Commodities (Feed the Future, FtF) and to reduce poverty through value added exports (the Africa Competitiveness and Trade Expansion Initiative, ACTE)

The overall objective of the Trade Hub Project is to increase Africa's share of world trade by increasing exports at a faster rate than the growth in overall trade, and by improving West Africa's international private sector competitiveness in targeted value chains other than extractive industries.

The project is designed to achieve two intermediate results 1) improving private sector capacity of the region's farmers and firms by addressing constraints to targeted value chains; and 2) improving the business enabling environment by addressing economy-wide constraints such as the transport and trade barriers affecting the efficiency of the region's ports, corridors, and borders.

The project's major components are:

- The Economics and Financial Sector
- Trade and Transport Enabling Environment
- Value Chain Development
- Capacity Building
- Communications
- Administration and Management, Including Grants Administration

At its heart, USAID/West Africa's Trade Hub Network is a capacity building effort that will entail working with several key groups of African Partners, a multi-donor funded Transport and Facilitation Observatory, Global Development Alliances, with private sector companies, regional private sector associations, and finally with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA). The project's focus will be to develop associations and regional alliances that can act independently from donor support and take on a greater leadership role in promoting reforms, attracting buyers and investors, and adopting improved practices.

Context for this Assignment
The Trade Hub Network (THN) will partner with and strengthen capacities of regional private sector associations, business services providers (finance, market information, etc.), and trade advisory centers that support the value chains targeted under the project. **S**elected associations will have the ability and interest to work regionally, and goals, interests, and potential capacities aligned with the aims of the Trade project. The THN will make this determination using the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool, to evaluate institutional competencies, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for strengthening.

An expected deliverable during the 90-day THN start-up period is a Partner Selection and Assessment report. The THN Capacity Building team, in collaboration with the Value Chain team, will conduct assessments of the initial choice of partners, including four associations linked to the four pre-selected value chains the project will work with. **The present assignment will be focused on the following value chains associations and institutional support entities:**

1. West African Grains Network (WAGN)—Rice, Maize, and Millet/ Sorghum.
   The WAGN member associations targeted for this assessment are the Comité Interprofessionnel des Céréales du Burkina Faso (CIC-B), and the Comité Interprofessionnel du Riz du Burkina (CIR-B)
2. Confédération des Fédérations Nationales de la Filière Bétail/Viande des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (COFENABVI AO) —Livestock (cattle, sheep and goats).
3. African Cashew Alliance
4. Global Shea Alliance
5. Borderless Alliance
6. AGOA Resource Centers – network of trade support institutions working with export-ready companies, customs services and governments; and providing assistance on export procedures and documentation, and at a higher level sectoral export strategies to help eligible countries take better advantage of AGOA.
7. Réseau de Systèmes d'Information des Marches en Afrique de l'Ouest (RESIMAO)

These organizations were partners on the previous USAID West Africa Trade Hubs, the Agribusiness Transformation Program (ATP) and Enhanced-Agribusiness Transformation Program (E-ATP), as well as USAID West Africa Trade Hub. The new Trade Hub Network project will capitalize on the relationships cultivated by current staff with the selected associations, to build on previous achievements and scale up activities that will enable partner organizations to lead growth in regional trade and exports in the supported value chains.

Objectives of the Assignment

General objective
This assignment will identify the bases for collaborative partnership with the identified partners. It will define institutional capacity strengthening needs, and provide information for upgrading options and plans for enhancing revenue and sustainability.

Specific Objectives

1. Introduce the Trade Hub Network project, the proposed interventions and targets, and establish alignment with partner associations' mandate and goals.

2. Reaffirm commitment of the associations to work with the Trade Hub Network.
3. Familiarize the partners with the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) that the THN will use with the partners for self-assessment of performance in their various areas of competency, and for to measure progress in developing local capacity.
4. Develop updated profiles of each partner association based on OCAT findings. For COFENABVI AO and WAGN members CIC-B and CIR-B, the reference point will be the 2012-2013 Partner Institutional Viability Assessment (PIVA) conducted by the previous ATP/E-ATP projects. Profiles will identify strengths and weaknesses, and establish a baseline for measuring progress in institutional capacity resulting from THN support. The OCAT assessment will enable the THN to determine best approaches to tranform the current resource centers into Trade Resource Centers (TRC) and strenghten their capacity to deliver fee-based service offeriengs to enable greater sustainability.
5. Define initial capacity building needs, and proposed interventions that will inform THN capacity building work planning for remainder of FY14.

Expected Results or Deliverables

- Snapshots of partner associations will be generated. Each profile will include information about the association's present mandate, competencies, current activities in their focus value chains, major achievements and challenges, and areas for THN support.
- A draft partner assessment report for each of the initial partners will be submitted by June 6, 2014 to the COP for review and approval.
- A revised final report will be submitted to USAID by June 15, 2014.
- Tentative plans and dates for conducting in-depth interactive OCAT workshops with the leadership and member organizations of each value chain association, to share and verify findings from the initial assessments, and prioritize capacity building needs and proposed interventions.

Methodology

Assessment Tool

The method that will be used for the partner assessment will be the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT). The OCAT is designed to be a participatory self-assessment tool, but can be modified to be an external evaluation. It is useful for identifying an organization's relative strengths and weaknesses and provides the baseline information needed to develop strengthening interventions. OCAT is better suited for measuring one organization over time, and will therefore be used to monitor progress and impact of capacity building support activities. The OCAT measures seven capacity and sub-elements, including:

- **Governance** (board, mission/goal, constituency, leadership, legal status)
- **Management Practices** (organizational structure, information management, administration procedures, personnel, planning, program development, program reporting)
- **Human Resources** (human resources development, staff roles, work organization, diversity issues, supervisory practices, salary and benefits)
- **Financial Resources** (accounting, budgeting, financial/inventory controls, financial reporting)
- **Service Delivery** (sectoral expertise, constituency, impact assessment)

- **External Relations** (constituency relations, inter-NGO collaboration, public relations, local resources, media)
- **Sustainability** (program/benefit sustainability, organizational sustainability, financial sustainability, resource base sustainability)

The OCAT uses an assessment team that conducts research before completing the OCAT assessment sheet. OCAT's data-gathering step allows for systematic cross-checking of perceived capacities with actual or observable facts. The OCAT categorizes an organization's capacity areas into one of four developmental stages that are used as descriptors for rating assessment findings: 1) nascent, 2) emerging, 3) expanding, and 4) mature. The result of an OCAT is a detailed description of the organization's capacity areas in terms of progressive stages of organizational development, which then informs capacity building needs and responsive actions.

Assessment Team

The Capacity Building & Training Unit (CBTU) and the Value Chain specialists unit will make up the OCAT "assessment team". Individual team members will be assigned an association with which to interact and collect information, per the table below. The CBTU will develop a standard protocol for the information gathering exercise, including guiding questions, interview formats, transcribing interview notes, and for scoring. This will be shared with each team member. As information gathering from each association is completed, discussion notes will be submitted to the CBTU to transcribe and analyze using the OCAT assessment sheet. This information will be shared with the assessment team, who will then, collectively, do the overall scoring and rating of each association.

Partner Association/Head Office	Focus Value Chain/Service	Assigned THN Staff
African Cashew Alliance/Accra	Cashew	Isatou Jack & Jean Didier Nacoulma
Global Shea Alliance/Accra	Shea	Isatou Jack & Jean Didier Nacoulma
Borderless Alliance/Accra	Transport	Isatou Jack, Jean Didier Nacoulma & Sola Afolabi
COFENABVI/Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina	Livestock	Seydou Sidibe
RESIMAO/Regional	Market Information System	Malick Lompo
West African Grains Network (WAGN) /Burkina (member organizations implicated: CIC-B and CIR-B)	Cereals- rice, maize, millet/sorghum	Koukou Zotoglo
AAFEX/Dakar	Specialty Foods	Abou Fall
AGOA Resource/Trade Centers: a. Senegal b. Gambia c. Burkina Faso d. Cote d'Ivoire	Trade Advisory	Isatou Jack & Abou Fall

Schedule and Level of Effort

Task	Date	LOE
Research/information collection: *Assessment Team Members*	April 21-May 31	40
Analyses of findings, drafting report: *Isatou Jack and Jean Didier Nacoulma*	May 1- June 04	35
Draft partner selection report submitted for review: *Isatou Jack*	June 6	1
Final report to USAID: *Jeff Povolny*	June 15	1
Travel for Evaluation of AGOA Resource Centers:		
Gambia: Isatou Jack	May 5-7	2
Senegal: Abou Fall	May 12-14	2
Burkina Faso: Abou Fall & Isatou Jack	May 26-28	2
Cote d'Ivoire: Abou Fall & Isatou Jack	May 29-31	2
Total		**85**

Reporting Relationships

The Capacity Building and Training Director will provide oversight for the OCAT assessments, compilation reports, and submission of final report. Trade Hub Network Value Chain Specialists and the Market Information Specialist will provide support and assistance for completion of the partner evaluations.

ANNEX B: SAMPLE LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID TRADE HUB WEST AFRICA

May 12, 2014

Mr. Roger Brou
Managing Director
African Cashew Alliance
4th St., Kuku Hill
PMB Osu, Accra, Ghana

Startup of the new Trade Hub Network activities and collaboration with the Africa Cashew Alliance

Dear Roger,

We are pleased to inform you that USAID just awarded the Trade Hub and African Partners Network (Trade Hub) to Abt Associates in early April. The new Trade Hub will continue the work performed by previous USAID projects: Agribusiness and Trade (ATP and E-ATP) and the West Africa Trade Hub (see attached one-page brief).

At this early stage, the Trade Hub is conducting an assessment of its potential partners to inform us on upgrade plans and options for building partner's sustainability. My colleagues Issatou Jack, Sr. Capacity Building & Training Specialist Manager and Abou Fall, Regional AGOA/Trade Capacity Manager, will be heading this process, and we would like your support to initiate this process with the African Cashew Alliance.

We would like to propose a meeting for the assessment, and we will send you the form in advance of the meeting. Please specify suitable dates in the next three weeks to visit and perform the evaluation.

We are hopeful the results of this evaluation will determine the best approach for future collaboration between the Trade Hub and the African Cashew Alliance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Povolny, Chief of Party
USAID/West Africa's Trade Hub and African Partners Network
Marvel House, Giffard Road, Cantonments, Accra | Ghana
Ghana mobile +233 (0) 261 126 724 | U.S. mobile +1 (202) 603 3550

USAID Trade Hub and African Partners Network

Main: Marvel House, Giffard Road • P.O. Box CT 4274 • Cantonments • **Accra, Ghana**
Satellite: **Dakar, Senegal • Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

5 mai 2014

Monsieur Guy M'Bengue
Administrateur-Directeur General
Association pour la Promotion des Exportations de Côte d'Ivoire (APEX-CI)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Démarrage des activités du nouveau Trade Hub (projet de l'USAID) et collaboration avec le Centre de Ressources AGOA (CRA) à l'APEX-CI

Monsieur M'Bengue,

Nous avons le plaisir de vous informer que l'USAID vient juste d'attribuer, au mois d'Avril, le projet Trade Hub and African Partners Network (Trade Hub) à la société Abt Associates. Le nouveau Trade Hub continuera le travail déjà entamé par les projets précédents de l'USAID, à savoir, *Agribusiness and Trade* (ATP et E-ATP) et le *West Africa Trade Hub* (voir pièce jointe).

A cette étape préliminaire du projet, le Trade Hub est en train de mener une série d'évaluations de ses partenaires afin d'identifier les meilleures formes de collaboration, en vue d'œuvrer à la pérennisation de ses activités. Mes collègues Issatou Jack, Spécialiste en Renforcement de Capacités et Formation, et Abou Fall, Conseiller Commerce/AGOA et Partenariats, se chargeront de cette activité, dont nous sollicitons votre concours.

Nous proposons une réunion les 29-30 mai pour l'évaluation précitée, et nous vous enverrons le canevas par anticipation à la réunion.

Nous espérons que les résultats qui découleront de cette évaluation détermineront la meilleure approche de collaboration ente le Trade Hub et APEX-CI

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur M'Bengue, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

Jeffrey Povolny, Chef de Projet
USAID/West Africa's Trade Hub and African Partners Network
Accra, Ghana

USAID Trade Hub and African Partners Network

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Satellite: **Dakar, Senegal • Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

ANNEX C: SCHEDULE OF OCA MEETINGS

Date	Organization	Name and title	Contact
April 25	Intitial roundtable with African Cashew Alliance (ACA) Borderless Alliance Global Shea Alliance (GSA)	Roger Brou (ACA) Justin Bayili (Borderless) Aaaron Adu (GSA)	
May 5	The Gambian Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA)	Mariama T. Fatajo, Director Business and Export Development	mtfatajo@giepa.com +2209962903/2163709
		Carlos Gomez, Business and Export Development Office	cgomez@giepa.com +2209808687/6708687
		Basainey E. Jammeh, Manager Business development	bejammeh@giepa.com +2203724517/9825417
May 15	African Cashew Alliance	Roger BROU, Managing Director	rbrou@africancashewalliance.com +233 544 316 510/ 244 319 478
		Olivier KABRE, Monitoring & Evaluation/Market Information System	
		Ernest DANKWA, Finance Manager	+233 544335282 edanka@africancashewalliance.com
		Miriam GYAMFI, Project Coordinator	+233544315446 mgyamfi@africancashewallaince.com
		Marian Lamptey, Office Coordinator	
May 19	Agence Senegalaise de Promotion des Exportations (ASEPEX), Dakar	Mrs Oulimata Fall Sarr, Directeur de la Promotion et de l'intelligence Economique et Commerciale	+221773125430/338892988 ofall@asepex.sn
May 20	Association Afrique agro Export (AAFEX)	Hawa Sy Berete, In Charge of Information and Communication	+221 33 867 94 80 se@aafex.com
		El hadji Abdoulaye Diack, Executive Director	+221 775128263 eadiack@aafex.com
May 26	Chambre de Commerce dt d'Instrutie du Burkina (CCIBF)	Felix Sanon, Director of Bsiness Services and Cooperation	+22670255684 felix.sanon@ccibf

		Mamadou Ouattara, Trade Advisor, Director of Business development and Cooperation	+22670398858 Mamadou.ouattara@ccibf
May 27	West African Grain Network (WAGN), Ouagadougou	Soumaila Sanou, Chairman	+226 70 75 45 35/ 70 33 40 94 cicb@yahoo.fr
		Mrs Rita Nonguierma, Admin Assistant	+226 70 75 45 35 cicb@yahoo.fr
May 27	Confédération des Fédérations Nationales de la filière Bétail-Viande-Afrique de l'Ouest COFENABVI-AO, Ouagadougou	Timbila Thomas Sawadogo, Permanent Secretary	+226 70 20 52 37/79429110 cofenabvi_ao@yahoo.fr
		Mrs Sophie Sawadogo, Country Representative	+226 50 37 53 02/70 08 22 28 sawadogo_sophie@yahoo.fr
May 30	Réseau des Systèmes d'Information de Marché d'Afrique de l'Ouest (RESIMAO), Abidjan	Noël Kouable, Vice Coordinator	+225 07 85 22 93/ 04 8148 50 noelkouable@yahoo.fr
May 30	Association pour la Promotion des Exportations en Cote d'Ivoire (APEX-CI)	Guy M'Bengue, Co-CEO USCIBC Global, Chairman	+22520302530/07077555 g_mbengue@apex-ci.org
		Gerard Amangoua, Executive Director	+22520302530/07003073 g_amangoua@apex-ci.org
		Euloge Camara, AGOA resource center Officer	+22520302530/07847820 camaraeuloge@yahoo.fr
		Mrs Marie Pascale Aka, Vice President in charge of Strategic Partnerships	+22520302172/07653810 a_marie-pascale@apex-ci.org
June 2	Borderless Alliance	Justin Bayili, Executive Secretary	+233 244 340 747 jbayili@borderlesswa.com
		Awudu H. Zingomah, Finance manager	+233244864126 ahamidu@borderlesswa.com
		Mrs Aline Adamou, Administrative & Logistics Officer	+233249266580 aadamou@borderlesswa.com
		Mrs Afua Eshun, Advocacy Program Advisor	+233244334589 aeshun@borderlesswa.com
		Noel Kossonou, Transport Specialist	+233249266577 nkossonou@borderlesswa.com
		Dela B Bani ICT Specialist	+233540113108 dbani@borderlesswa.com

ANNEX D: REFERENCES

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Fowler, A., and Jan Ubels. 2010. The Multi-faceted Nature of Capacity: Two Leading Frameworks. In Capacity Development in Practice, edited by Jan Ubels, Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo and Alan Fowler. Earthscan, London, Washington, D.C.

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Trade Hub and African Partners Network**.** 2014b. "Value Chain Assessment Report: Cashews." Prepared for the Trade Hub and African Partners Network by Abt Associates Inc., Bethesda, MD, in collaboration with J.E. Austin, Arlington, VA, May 2014.